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CHINESE GRAVE SCULPTURES
OF THE HAN PERIOD

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BY

BERTHOLD LAUFER

TEN PLATES AND FOURTEEN TEXT-FIGURES



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TO

PROF. EDOUARD CHAVANNES

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The relics of stone sculpture left to us from the Han period (B.C. 206—221 A.D.) fall into three classes: (1) mortuary chambers built of stone slabs, (2) stone pillars erected in front of them, and (3) stone vaults sheltering the coffin. Inscription tablets of the same epoch, giving historical records, are sometimes also adorned with floral and other designs, but are of secondary importance for archæological purposes.

Of mortuary chambers, that in honor of the *Wu* family datable to 147 A.D. has become best known by the ingenious study of Prof. CHAVANNES in his meritorious publication "*La sculpture sur pierre en Chine au temps des deux dynasties Han*", Paris, 1893. Unfortunately, the slabs constituting the funeral temple of *Wu* had been thrown into disorder long ago and, on being excavated, were haphazardly united again in a building constructed for the purpose, so that only an ideal reconstruction of the original arrangement of the slabs along the walls and the roof can be attempted. CHAVANNES ("*Note préliminaire sur les résultats archéologiques de la mission*" etc., in *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, Paris, 1908) visited the Hiao-t'ang-shan in 1907 and discovered that the mortuary chamber of that place is still intact and thus presents to us the only known example of such a building in good preservation. The other mortuary chamber near Kin-hiang mentioned by Chavannes was inspected also by me in January 1904, being prompted to do so by a passage in the Chinese chronicle of that district alluding to its existence.

It is due to the efforts of CHAVANNES that the illustrations of the pillars belonging to the sepulchre of *Wu* are now made accessible, in his monumental work "Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale" (two volumes, Paris, 1909); he has discovered further three other pairs of similar pillars in the district of Têng-fêng in Honan Province, dated A.D. 118, 123, and the third probably 123, respectively. There are also stone chambers open in front, with two columns posed on stone pedestals, dividing the hall into three parts. These columns also are usually carved with sculptures, and even provided with a date-mark.

Besides a repetition of the bas-reliefs of *Wu*, the reproduction of which is here far superior to that in the former publication, he reproduces also the stones brought home by Prof. FISCHER, rubbings of some bas-reliefs near Ya-chou in Szechuan, obtained by Captain D'OLLONE, and a number of rubbings from stones the localities of which remain unascertained. Two of these, Nos. 187 and 189, I am able to identify, as photographs of the stones themselves have been published by Father A. VOLPERT.¹ These stones were discovered by VOLPERT himself; and rubbings taken afterwards by Chinese seem to have then fallen into the hands of CHAVANNES.

They belong, as do also the majority of CHAVANNES' rubbings of *provenance inconnue*, it would seem, to the third class of Han sculpture-work described by VOLPERT in the article above referred to. These stone vaults are composed of six slabs, the lateral sides being about 2 m long, the two slabs at the head and foot being square; the slabs are well hewn and carefully joined, they vary of course in size, and are from 10 cm

¹ A. VOLPERT, Gräber und Steinskulpturen der alten Chinesen, *Anthropos*, Vol. III, 1908, pp. 14—18, with 3 plates illustrating 7 grave-stones. As will be seen from his Plate III, the two stones there figured are identical with stones I and II published by FISCHER in *T'oung Pao*, 1908.

to 30 cm thick. In many cases these slabs are left without any sculpture; in others, four sides are covered with carvings; in still others, only two; and in some, only the lid. It is always the inner sides of the slabs that bear the sculptures. This obviously indicates that their purpose was to serve the dead, not the living; they were not monuments to remind posterity of the life and doings of a bygone age, or to keep alive the memory of the dead person; but they were deposited in the grave, with face turned towards its inmate, solely for his enjoyment and recreation. They were the result of a mortuary art which was destined not to see the light, but to slumber the eternal sleep with the deceased. Some of these slabs are remarkable for their technique and artistic execution. Most carvings, in distinction from the bas-reliefs of Wu-liang, are worked in high-relief, raised about 6 mm above the surface of the stone; on others, also hollow incised carvings occur in the surface of the stone, which is only rudely hewn out, but not polished. The latter process may presumably lay claim to greater antiquity.

The grave-vaults called *kuo* 槨 or 礮, enclosing the coffin, are mentioned in literature as early as the Chou dynasty, and, as the composition of the Chinese character points out, were built of wood or stone, — in ancient times probably more frequently of wood, that being the cheaper material. There are instances on record of vaults having been built of solid stone at the time of the Chou, but these records are so scanty as to warrant only the conclusion that this took place merely in exceptional cases (DE GROOT, *The Religious System of China*, Vol. I, p. 288).¹ The example quoted by this author from the *Si-king tsa ki* — to the effect that the tomb of King Siang of

¹ Compare also CHAVANNES, *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, Vol. II, pp. 4 and 176, for mention of stone sarcophagi in the history of the house of Ts'in.

Wei (B.C. 334—319) entirely constructed of veined stone and over eight feet high contained no trace of a coffin, goes to show that vaults and coffins were not always differentiated, and that the corpse was plainly deposited in the vault without being separately enclosed. This fact is corroborated from the actual finds *in situ* in the Han graves of Shantung, where in many cases the stone vault serves also the function of the coffin as well, and was simply looked upon as the coffin or a substitute for it. The results of archæological investigation, carried on so far to a limited extent, seem to teach that this point was in the main the outcome of an economic question; i. e., well-to-do people who could afford having both had a wooden coffin placed in a stone vault, while the poor had to be content with the one or the other. At all events, the material at present available allows the inference that in the Han period the erection of stone vaults for burial was by no means rare; that they are found scattered over a large geographical area, and are sometimes of huge dimensions and executed in an admirable style of solidity and beauty.

I propose to make known in the following pages eight newly discovered carved slabs forming parts of stone vaults of the Han period in the province of Shantung. In regard to their discovery, I believe I must restrict myself to a statement of the plain objective facts as laid down under each heading.

The stone (1.10×0.80 m) represented in Plate I originates in the district of *Sze-shui* 泗水縣 in the prefecture of Yen-chou. About 50 *li* eastward from the present district-city, near the sources of the Sze River, there is the site of the ancient town, called *Pien* 卞縣 at the time of the Han dynasty, the ruins of which are still visible. Along the road leading in a westerly direction from these remains is a large tomb rising about 1 m above the ground. It was covered with the



Plate I.



sculptured stone here figured, the right side and lower right corner being unfortunately slightly damaged. Also the surface has suffered somewhat from the ravages of time, the explanatory brief inscriptions originally engraved beside the figures being so much effaced that they have become illegible. Otherwise this relief represents one of the best works of Han lapidary art, in that the human figures are full of life and treated with great care. The scene of action is laid, as usually at that period, in the open spacious hall of a building. There are two distinct buildings here represented, though the one is posed on the top of the other, resulting in the appearance of a two-story house. This, however, is not the case, or was not the artist's intention, as the upper structure is provided to the right with a large entrance-gate, a double-winged door with a threshold and a lintel being plainly outlined. Such a door would have no meaning in an upper story, so that this building must be conceived of as being located behind the front building, on the same level with it. It is true, there is no space left between the two, perhaps owing to lack of room, but it will be noticed that the lower building is much higher (about one-third) than the upper one. Both houses have gabled roofs. To the left of the door the half-figure of a man in profile is visible, presumably looking out of a window, as is the case in several miniature houses of Han pottery. Another squatting figure, turning his back to him and looking in the opposite direction, has a demoniacal bearded face, with a pointed tuft of hair on the head.

Below, we see in the right corner a man squatting on the floor, his hands folded over his breast, the head slightly bent downward, not lacking in a dignity of expression which is well brought out in his stern face with long drooping mustache. Two other men are entering the room, the one in front prostrating himself humbly, just about to knock his forehead on

the ground, the other man standing behind him in the attitude of making a deep reverential bow. Behind the pillar there is a man standing upright. These are all clad in long flowing robes reaching down to the feet, apparently fastened around the waist with a girdle, and with baggy drooping sleeves; on the whole, not unlike the Japanese kimono. The way the collar fits around the neck may be seen to advantage in the figure of the host.

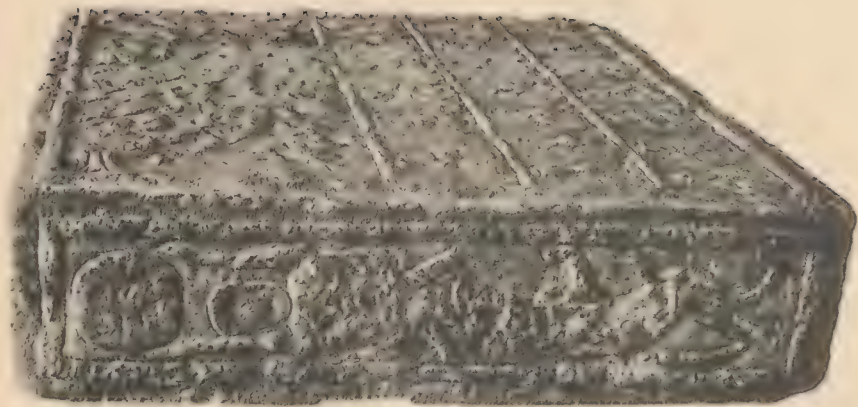
There is a small object in the room, just below the face of the kotowing man, which cannot be made out, except that there is a square pedestal with an indefinable something on its top.

The stone slab figured on Plate II (0.90×0.85 m) comes from a mountain *Liang-ch'êng* 兩城, 60 *li* south of *Tsi-ning chou*. In ancient times two towns *Mao* (毛) *ch'êng* and *K'uang* (匡) *ch'êng* were situated there in close proximity, whence the present village has derived the name *Liang ch'êng* 'Two-Towns.' The slab was found near an open mortuary chamber, partially sticking out of the soil, the relief turned upward; and beneath it there was a stone boulder a foot thick.

The lower section of the relief is occupied by three rows of figures of sitting men, altogether twenty,—six in the upper and seven in the two other rows. The upper six are grouped in pairs looking at each other, they are bareheaded, have their hair parted in the middle, and seemingly a somewhat thickened knot at the occiput, while the rest are adorned with high caps. All of them have their hands hidden in the sleeves which they have bundled up into a muff.

The upper panel is filled by two joined trees symmetrically arranged, their gnarled trunks touching one another above the ground, and then rising in a curve to join again in their branches, which are interlocked by knots. The space between the trunks is occupied by the figure of a man. Long leaves

Laufer, Grave-Sculptures.



b



a

Plate II.
Sculptured Grave-Stone
a. Front-View. *b*. Side-View.



are delineated as growing from the top of the trees, and eleven birds (magpies) are perching on them, while a bird on the wing is in the left and right corner. The perching bird, which is the first starting from the left, with a long-pointed tail-feather, seems to represent a different species from the others. Two horses are standing in the shadow of the trees; their position towards the tree is the same as that depicted in a bas-relief of Wu-liang. In front of each horse there is a bird.

This tree bears an unmistakable resemblance to the one figured several times on the bas-reliefs of Wu-liang (*Sculpture*, Plates V, X and XX), and explained by CHAVANNES (*Sculpture*, p. 29) as the tree *ho-huan*,¹ which has this particular feature, that all its branches are interlaced. But on the *Wu* reliefs, the tree consists only of a single trunk; in one case (l.c., Pl. X, also in BUSHELL, *Chinese Art*, Vol. I, Fig. 16) the tree has a forked trunk, in curious adaptation to the whole geometric and symmetric cast of this tree design. Compared with these three representations, the tree on our high-relief displays, despite the artificial character of the motive, a remarkably free natural treatment. A very similar tree, with two horses in its shadow, occurs also on a grave-stone illustrated by A. VOLPERT (in *Anthropos*, Vol. III, Pl. opposite p. 16); the reproduction does not come out very well, so that I do not feel prepared to say positively whether this is a single tree or one composed of two trunks.

While the tree on our Plate II doubtless agrees in its outward appearance with the *ho-huan* of Wu-liang, it presents in the two joined trunks another characteristic which calls to mind the motive of the "joined trees" (*mu lien li*, i.e., the principle of the union of trees) appearing among "the mar-

¹ 合歡 *Acacia Nemu*, s. BRETSCHNEIDER, *Botanicon Sinicum*, Part III, No. 324.

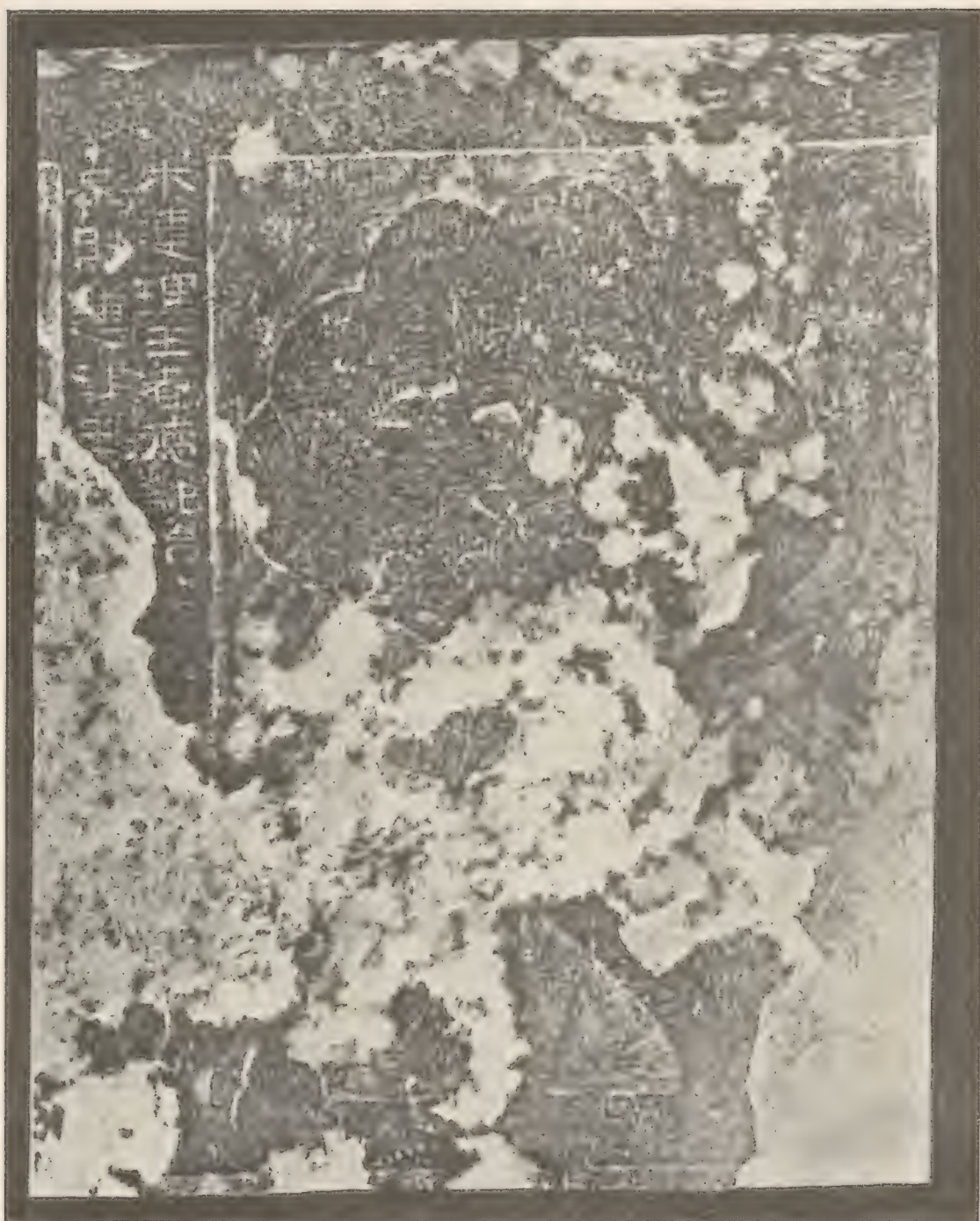


Fig. 1.
The Motive of "Joined Trees"
on a Han Bas-Relief
(from an original rubbing).

vellous objects of good foreboding," and briefly commented on in "Chinese Pottery of the Han Dynasty," pp. 284—286.

To render comparison easy, I insert here these two patterns after drawings made exactly from the illustrations in the

Kin-shih so, which, in their turn, are reproduced from rubbings.

One of them is here illustrated twice. It occurs on a stone slab belonging to the tomb of Wu-liang in a whole series of so-called "marvellous objects of good omen" 祥瑞圖. This slab

is unfortunately damaged to a great extent, as may be gathered from Plate XLVII in CHAVANNES' *Mission*, where it is reproduced in its entirety. In Fig. 1 the panel containing the tree pattern is after a rubbing in my possession, and in Fig. 2 the same design is reproduced from a drawing made with great care and exactness from the illustration in the *Kin-shih so* (section *shih so*, Vol. IV). I have explained on a former

occasion (*Chinese Pottery*, p. 70) owing to what agencies the condition of the bas-reliefs has gradually deteriorated, and why the two brothers *Fêng*, the authors of that monumental work, had a better opportunity for obtaining faithful reproductions before the year 1821, the date of its publication. Fig. 3 shows the same pattern, but executed in a different way, on a monument erected in 171 A.D. in honor of an official *Li Si* in



Fig. 2.

The same as Fig. 1 after a drawing made from *Kin-shih so*.

木連理王者德純洽本為一
家財連理生

Ch'êng hien, Kansu Province. Thus the peculiar character of this design may be accounted for by the fact that it was worked up in the far west of China, in a geographical area differing from that of Shantung in many respects. In this case, this motive is also conceived of as a "marvellous object of good omen," and grouped together with three others in one composition, which may now be viewed in CHAVANNES' *Mission*, No. 167.



Fig. 3.

The Motive of "Joined Trees"
on a Han Bas-Relief of

171 A. D.

(Drawing after *Kin-shih so*).

There is certainly, as close inspection will show, a noteworthy distinction in style between the representation of this subject among the objects of good omen and that on my grave-stone (Plate II), which seems to be inspired on the one hand by a more naturalistic tendency, and on the other hand by a certain process of assimilation to the *ho-huan* tree; while the former designs are somewhat crudely outlined and of a strictly conventional character. The union of the trees is here accomplished merely by the trunks being bridged over by a connecting bough, while on the grave-stone the motive is expressed with more intense emphasis by a complete knotting of all the branches.

I believe that an explanation of the origin of this curious art-motive may be offered from the domain of Chinese folklore. G. SCHLEGEL, in a study, "Parallèles en Folklore," (in *Mélanges Harlez*, Leiden, 1896, p. 274), calls attention to the "love-trees" (*arbres d'amour*) of Chinese popular notion. After reminding us of Ovid's story of Philemon and Baucis, who were transformed by Jupiter into an oak and a linden tree, whose branches became inextricably intertwined, and of Tristan and

Isolde, buried by King Marco in the same marble tomb, on which a vine and a rose-bush planted by him so strongly embraced each other that no human force was capable of separating them, he goes on to tell the following story from the *Lieh i chi*. "At the time of the Chou dynasty, a certain Han P'êng, secretary to K'ang, king of the principality of Sung had a very beautiful wife, named Ho, who had the misfortune to have the king fall in love with her. He had her husband cast into prison, where he subsequently committed suicide. The king led the widow one day to a high terrace, where he expressed his feeling, when the virtuous lady flung herself from the tower and met instantaneous death. In her girdle a letter was found in which she asked the king to grant her as a last favor, to be buried in the same tomb with her husband. But the king, jealous even after her death, had them buried in two opposite tombs. During the night two trees grew over their graves, and within ten days reached such a size that their roots became united and their branches intertwined. The people, touched by this event, called them trees of love."

MAYERS (The Chinese Reader's Manual, p. 47) gives a variant of this legend from the *Sou shên ki*. According to this account, the bodies of the couple were caused by the enraged tyrant to be interred at a distance from each other; but, to the amazement of all, the two coffins sprouted into growth, the vaults became united in one, and over the branches of the tree which grew up from the tomb there hovered perpetually two birds like the *yüan-yang*, the male and female mandarin-duck, singing a dirge in harmonious chorus.

In the *Tu shu tsi ch'êng* this subject is discussed in Section 20, Chapter 309. Besides quoting the same story from the *Sou shên ki*, two further records are given from the *Shu i ki*. The one is a little song of the time of the Contending States running thus:

戰國時諸侯苦秦之難
有民從征戍秦不返
其妻思之而卒既葬
塚上生木枝葉皆向
夫所在而傾因謂之相思木

“At the time of the Contending States, the nobles (marquises) suffered grief from Ts'in; There were people who joined the warlike expedition against Ts'in, but did not return. Their wives, longing for them, died away; and when buried, Trees grew over their graves, the branches and leaves of which turned toward Where their husbands were, and because of their leaning they called them love-trees.”

The other reference of the *Shu i ki* relates to Chao Kien of Ts'in 秦趙閒, who possessed “a love-plant” 相思草 in the shape of a stone bamboo 石竹 (a kind of chrysanthemum: BRETSCHNEIDER, *Botanicon Sinicum*, Part II, No. 156), the knots of which were mutually connected; four other fancy names are given for this plant, like “the plant of mournful wives” 愁婦草 and “a widow's straw man” 孀草人, etc.

Li Shih-chên, the well-known author of the natural history *Pên ts'ao kang mu* in the latter half of the sixteenth century quotes the *Ku kin shih hua* 古今詩話, a work of the Sung dynasty, to the effect that the tree called “child of love” 相思子 is round and red, and that old men told a story that there was once a man deprived of his wife, who, longing for her, shed tears under a tree and died, hence its name; but that this tree is not identical with the love-tree on the grave of Han P'êng, which is the catalpa-tree with the principle of joining 連理梓木; some say that it is a species of maritime red-bean, a point not yet investigated.

相思子圖



Fig. 4.

The plant called "Child of Love"
(from *T'u shu tsi ch'êng*).

What is clear is, that the designation "love-tree" first occurs in connection with the story of Han P'êng, and is the outgrowth of popular lore. We certainly need not bother our heads about the botanical species corresponding to that tree of poetical imagination. The name appealed to the minds of the people and was applied later on to several plants, as some designate a red bean by that name, and others a tree. According to Li Shih-chên, "this tree grows in Kuang-tung, over ten feet high, and is of a white color; its leaves resemble those of the *huai* tree (*Sophora japonica*), its flowers are similar to those of *tsao kia* (*Gleditschia sinensis*), and its pods are like those of the pea; its seeds are as big as a small bean, and if cut asunder, half red and half black; they are used locally for inlaying head-ornaments." So far as I am aware, this tree has never been identified.

Fig. 4 shows the illustration of the love-tree given in the *T'u shu tsi ch'êng* which does not correspond to that description. Two plants are sprouting from behind a rock, one of them sending an offshoot transversely reclining over the neighboring stem, so that a "union" of two plants seems to have been brought out also here.

While the reminiscence of the old Han motive of "joined trees" is very weak in this picture, it is quite alive in a woodcut from the hand of Ting Yün-p'êng, a painter working towards the end of the Ming dynasty, and noted for his exceedingly fine and delicate lines in ink-sketches.¹ Ting's design is here reproduced in Fig. 5, from the *Fang-shih mo p'u*, a collection of engravings on ink-cakes, published in 1588

¹ I have from him a complete set of 18 large scrolls representing the 18 Arhat, and a series of humorous scenes from incidents in the life of Buddhist monks. His handwriting is so peculiarly fine and pedantic, that I can easily detect any forgeries of his work, which are very numerous in Peking and still manufactured.

(WYLIE, Notes on Chinese Literature, p. 146), with the inscription laid on the back of the ink-cake. This is not published in GILES'S "Introduction to the History of Pictorial Art," but is important in that the wording shows the artist's dependence on and obligation to the Han prototypes of the design. The seal under the drawing reads Nan-yü 南羽, the title of Ting, with which all his wood-engravings are signed.

The poem of four lines signed *Yü-lu*, and with the seal *Kien* (建印) attached, accordingly by *Kien Yü-lu*, reads as follows:

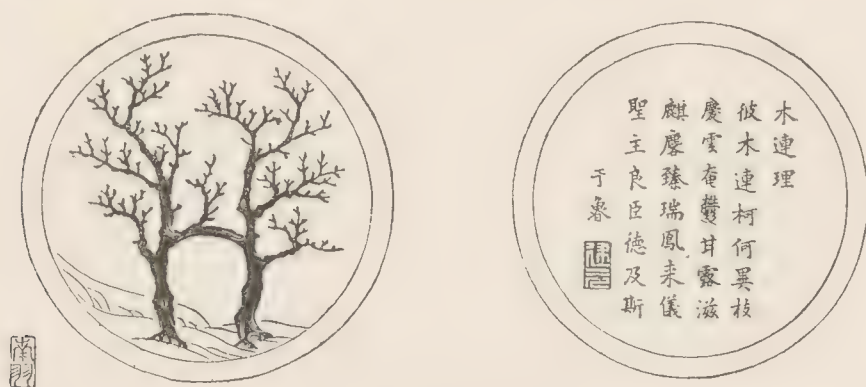


Fig. 5.
"Joined Trees"
by Ting Yün-p'êng
(from *Fang-shih mo p'u*).

"Arrangement of Trees in Union.

Those trees connected by a branch,—what a singular twig!
Beneficial clouds cover it with the flavor of the fragrant plant
yü and the sweet dew;
The K'i-lin appears, and the phenix of auspicious omen comes
with presents;
Only the virtuous actions of the emperor and the good sages
are equal to it."

We remember that the "sweet dew" (*kan-lu*),¹ the K'i-lin,

¹ Compare Fig. 6, drawn from the bas-relief of Li Si, representing the tree from which the sweet dew falls down, and the man who receives it on his palms.

and the phenix appear among the marvellous objects of good omen on the Han bas-reliefs; and Ting's design is so strikingly identical with that on the bas-relief of Li Si (Fig. 3), as I pointed out formerly, that he must have seen a copy of it.

In the same book, another curious drawing of the same artist will be found, designated as 連理石 "rocks in connected



Fig. 6.
The Tree of Sweet Dew
on a Han Bas-Relief
(drawing after *Kin-shih so*).

arrangement" and here reproduced in Fig. 7 to show the analogy to the tree design.

A close study of Chinese landscapes will probably reveal the fact that this motive is brought out, though perhaps also unconsciously, in the midst of natural scenery. It occurs, e.g., in a snow landscape by Li Ti 李迪 (twelfth century)¹ which is

¹ A native of Ho-yang in Yünnan (GILES, Introduction etc., p. 123).

reproduced in No. 71 of the Kokka. A peasant is returning home, leading his buffalo, and two bare, snow-laden trees arise in the background. Their trunks are joined in the middle, as may be gathered from the skeleton-sketch in Fig. 8.

It may be that this or a similar legend, like that of Han P'êng, suggested the artistic motive of the "joined trees," or at least influenced the artists of the Han period in shaping it. For the rest, the "joining" and doubling not only of trees, but also of animal and human creatures, seem to have been quite a favorite conception of that time; and it appears that these ideas, inclusive of those underlying the marvellous objects of good omen, had grown out of favorite popular traditions and the ancient national mythology, so few traces of which have unfortunately survived. On the bas-reliefs of Wu-liang, we meet, e. g., a dragon with two



石理陣

Fig. 7.
"Joined Rocks"
by Ting Yün-p'êng
(from *Fang-shih mo p'u*).

heads, probably impersonating lightning (CHAVANNES, *Sculpture*, p. 65), the fish with double body 比目魚 (Ibid., p. 36), and the bird with two heads 比翼鳥 (Ibid., p. 35), the two latter being counted among the marvellous objects of good omen.¹ On Plate III,

¹ Compare also CHAVANNES, *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, Vol. III, p. 426.

I have grouped the design of this bird, reproduced from the *Kin-shih so* (Fig. 2), with a unique piece of Han pottery discovered by me in *Si-ngan fu* last year (Fig. 1). This plastic figure moulded in clay affords a good idea of the real appearance



Fig. 8.

Sketch from a Landscape by Li Ti.

of such doubled creatures in the popular imagination. The bird intended is evidently a duck with but one body and one pair of webbed feet. There is a division-line incised, running over the neck and head, the artist doubtless having in mind to produce two different heads united in one; there is only one beak, or two half-beaks are supposed to have



Plate III.

1. Double Bird, from Drawing in *Kin-shih so*.
2. Double Duck of Han Pottery in Laufer's Collection, Field Museum, Chicago.

grown together into one; but beneath the beak and on the breast there are two oval cavities to mark division again. Otherwise it is one uniform bird. Wings and feathers are cleverly brought out in the clay. The figure is 16.5 cm high, and measures in length 21.5 cm from tail to beak.

I cannot help thinking also that this artistic conception had its basis in a popular notion and has sprung perhaps from the idea of the male and female mandarin-duck, the *yüan-yang* 鴛鴦 noted among the Chinese people for their mutual attachment, and therefore the recognized emblem of conjugal affection and fidelity. They are called *p'i niao* 匹鳥 "associated birds," for the reason that, if the one is captivated by man, the other will die at once (*San ts'ai t'u hui*, Section on Birds, Ch. II, p. 13 b). This statement goes back to the *Ku kin chu*, written in the fourth century by Ts'uei Pao (*Pên ts'ao kang mu*, Ch. 47, p. 6b).

If the archæologist has the right to sound also the human keynote in the monuments of antiquity, and to interpret with sympathetic imagination psychological phenomena expressed in them, I should feel like remarking that this mortuary piece of pottery seems to me to have been buried in the grave of a couple who had lived in great mutual devotion and affection, and implied the wish, "may you continue to be faithful to each other like the mandarin-ducks, which, during life and death, are but one."

In Fig. 9, the illustration of the *p'i i niao* from the *San ts'ai t'u hui* may be added, because it is interesting to see how such ideas, when once conceived, hold sway over the minds of the people, how they are worked out in later ages, with attempts to make out a definite bird species with a local habitat. "In the country Kie-hiung," says the *San-ts'ai*, "there is the bird with coupled wings. The *Êrh-ya* has it that it lives in the southern regions; if the wings are not coupled, it

cannot fly; they call it *kien-kien*. The commentary adds: it resembles the wild duck (*fu*), and is of dark-red color; each has one eye and one wing which in mutual connection enable



Fig. 9.

The Bird with Doubled Wings
(from *San ts'ai t'u hui*).

it to fly. When the ruling prince has the virtue of filial piety which spreads into far distant lands, then it appears."

The stone of our Plate II is provided on its lateral face with a most interesting carving in high relief (Plate II, b). We see there the figure of a man holding the sun-ball on

his hands, with arms stretched straight over his head; a quadruped monster is running towards him, and the impression is given, as if the man were shielding or hiding the sun from a suspected attack of this monster. That the circular object in question is really the sun, is evidenced by the fact that the well-known figure of the three-footed crow is engraved in it, and that the design thus depicted is the thought conveyance by which the idea of the sun is expressed on the Han bas-reliefs, as the figure of the toad in a circle characterizes the moon. The sun with the emblem of the crow on a Han bas-relief will be

found in Fig. 14 of BUSHELL's "Chinese Art", Vol. I and in CHAVANNES' *Mission*, No. 53. In Fig. 10 two birds of this type are illustrated from two engravings in the *Fang-shih mo p'u*.

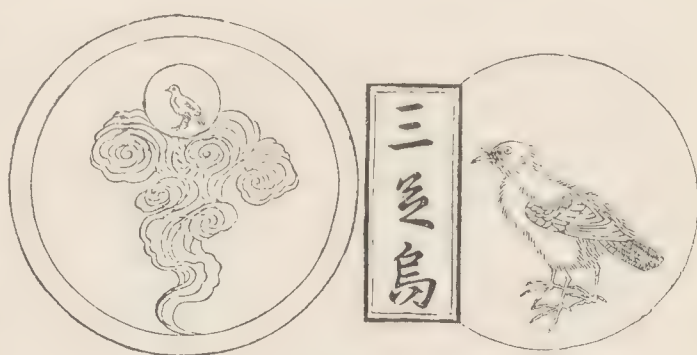


Fig. 10.
The Solar Bird with Three Feet
(from *Fang-shih mo p'u*).

It is evident that the scene in our relief presents the echo of some solar myth, but so far we have no contemporaneous records which might throw light on this subject.

In its composition, and partially in its contents, this relief reminds one of those on the east and west pillars of Wu-liang's tomb, now first published in CHAVANNES' *Mission*. In the representation No. 72, a man *en face*, holding a fish in front, is depicted; beneath him, a running hydra with elongated curved neck, followed by a running monster with wide-open jaws, of the same description as that on our Plate II, b. In No. 66 we notice on the top a man in profile, with his lower body terminating in a fish-tail, and a fish standing erect in front of him; below, the same type of hydra in the same

position as on No. 72; then a man holding a fish similar to the fish-holding man on the top of No. 72; and finally a fish engraved on the bottom of the relief. Again, turning to No. 64, we observe on the top a single fish with scales clearly indicated, a running hydra with stripes on neck and body, which is followed by a running tiger. Apparently these three reliefs, so uniform in subject and composition, have a mythological significance in common; the rôle assigned in our relief (Plate II, b) to the sun is manifestly taken here by the fish. There the monster has intentions on the sun, who is protected by the man; here, on the fish. That the fish is the object of the attack, is shown by the design on No. 64, where there is a single fish above the monster, and no man. That the man is ready to protect the fish, is brought out by his clutching it in his hands; and his deep interest in the fish is expressed in No. 66, where he bows over the fish with hands folded as if in prayer, and himself partakes of the nature of a fish. Might he be a fish-spirit? Might the man with the fish, attacked by the swift monster, bear some relationship to the man holding the sun against the same creature? Would finally, in view of these related designs, the equation of the sun with the fish be justifiable? ¹

Plate IV represents a carved slab that once formed the head-piece of a stone vault in the calcareous mountains near *Kia-hiang hien*.

The incised drawing on this grave-stone (0.67×0.47 m) is somewhat obliterated, and represents a three-storied palace flanked by roofed pillars. In the lower hall a person is sitting, and watchmen armed with lances are guarding the en-

¹ Dr. PAUL CARUS, following my suggestion, has meanwhile reproduced these three panels side by side in the July number of *The Open Court* (1911, p. 400) and is inclined to regard this representation as symbolizing an eclipse of the sun.



Plate IV.



Laufer, Grave-Sculptures.



Plate V.

trance. Very curious is a circular ring graved in the centre of the upper story, to my knowledge not to be found in any other bas-relief. It is intersected by two diagonal poles the ends of which are inserted into the corners of the lateral pillars. I do not venture to express an opinion on the significance of this ring. Windows of a circular shape, as is well known, are found in modern buildings, but so far none of this kind has been discovered in a house of the Han time, either in pottery or depicted in stone.

The grave-stone in Plate V (0.56×0.44 m), broken along the upper edge, is a fragment found in the mountains south of *Kia-hiang*. The relief is divided into two panels. The upper scene shows a box-shaped low chariot with high eight-spoked wheel, and trotting horse in the harness, the driver seizing the bridle tightly; a man is walking behind; a single horse (probably carrying an outrider) with saddle and stirrup is in front. The picture below illustrates a hunting-scene in a familiar composition. Two men with narrow caps and tight-fitting clothes are shouldering hunting-nets with long handles, and walking behind two slender greyhounds galloping side by side in the pursuit of two hares attacked in front by a man aiming with a powerful crossbow. The hunters' stratagem, accordingly, was to waylay the game scared up and chased by dogs into the fire-zone.

A similar scene is depicted among the reliefs of the village *Tsiao-ch'êng*, and illustrated after the *Kin-shih so* in "Chinese Pottery," p. 270. It will be noticed that the two compositions agree closely, the only difference being that the huntsman on the left side here holds a greyhound by a halter, and an additional bird and a dog that appear along the upper edge.

In his "Mission," CHAVANNES has reproduced under No. 176 a stone from the *Tsin-yang-shan* on which in the lower panel the same scene is repeated.

We have seen in the Han pottery vases which are covered with relief-bands that the representation of hunting-scenes was a favorite subject of the Han period in connection with the dead. Let us also remember, that, among the many groups accompanying a funeral procession in Peking, there is a sportsman's outfit consisting of hunting-hawks, hunting-dogs, a mule laden with a Mongol hunting-tent, and an unsaddled horse (W. GRUBE, *Zur. Pekinger Volkskunde*, p. 43).

The bas-relief on the grave-stone in Plate VI (0.74×0.60 m), originating in the mountains southward from *Kia-hiang*, is unfortunately badly damaged, and much effaced on its right side. A close examination, however, and a comparison with corresponding subjects on stones in a better state of preservation, render a plausible interpretation possible.

The bas-relief presents three different scenes in horizontal panels. The lower section on the left-hand side describes a variant of the representation of kitchen-work (as figured in "Chinese Pottery of the Han Dynasty," p. 87). Also here the kitchen is built in an open room, with a large cooking-range and a covered kettle on top of it; a kneeling figure in front of the range is poking the fire; two fishes and a pig's head, to be utilized as articles of food, are suspended from a rack on the wall, as well as a rectangular tray, apparently made of bamboo sticks, such as those which we find moulded in the clay on coeval mortuary stoves of pottery. The space adjoining the kitchen is unfortunately too much effaced to allow of definite identification. The upper parts of two men, with profiles beautifully carved, stand out clearly.

The central panel is a repetition of the motive "The Search for the Tripod Vessel," as illustrated and described in "Chinese Pottery" pp. 75—76.¹ It is a matter of profound regret that

¹ A new graphic account of this story may now be seen in CHAVANNES' *Mission*, No. 148, on a stone from *Liu-kia ts'un*. Also here the pulley is

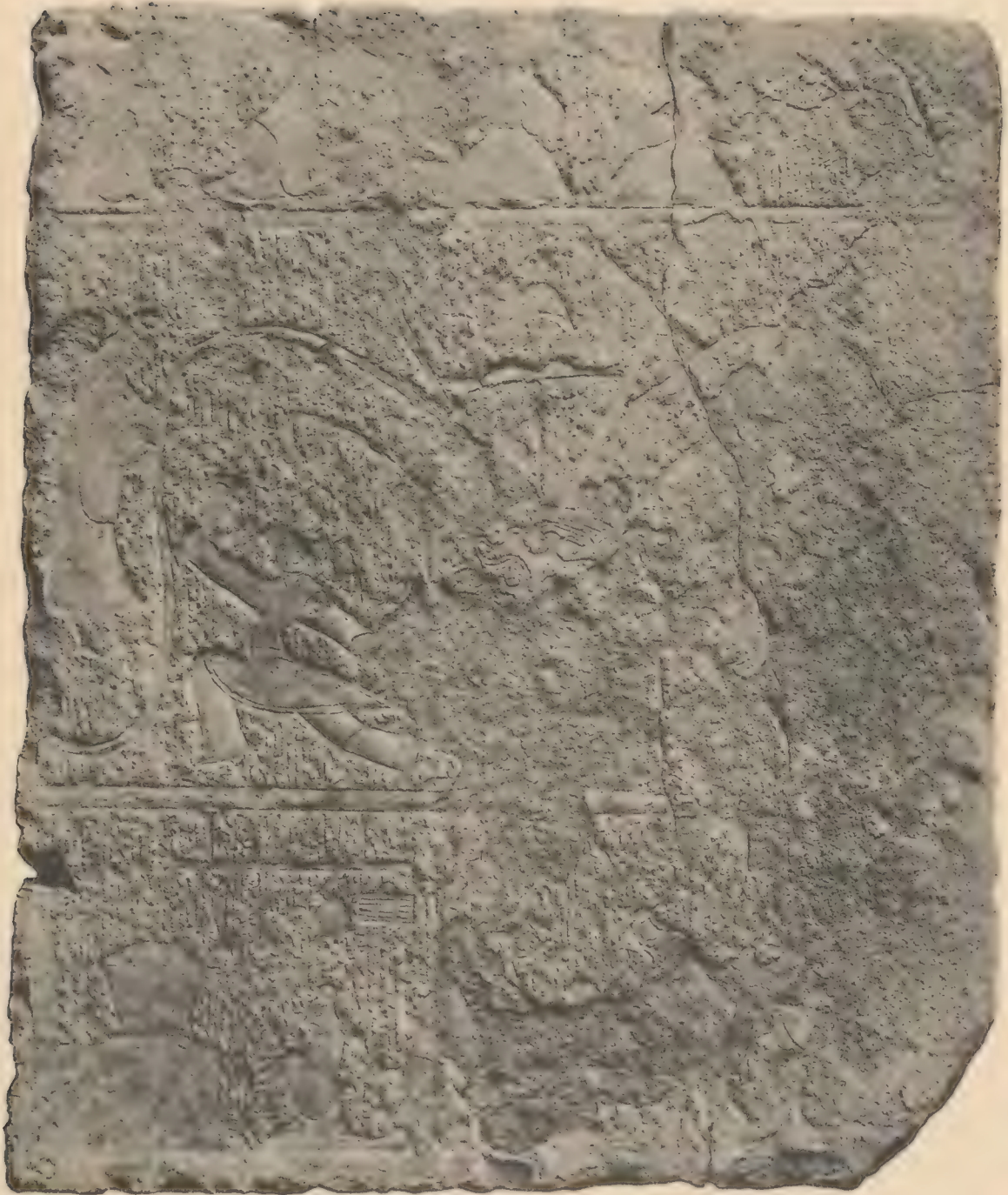


Plate VI.

the surface of the stone has here suffered so much that many details are lost, for this representation differs in many respects from the two hitherto known, and is much more vivid, with a gleam of realism. To the left below, a boat, and a man rowing it, are visible, and a tall man, straddling, is pulling the rope fastened to the bronze tripod. A dignified person, standing, has taken his place behind this rope. The



Fig. 11.
The Bronze Tripod Vessel
on the Bas-Relief in Plate VI
(from a rubbing).

bronze vessel in the centre is remarkable for the ornamentation brought out on its outside, and is here reproduced from a rubbing in Fig. 11.

On the top, the head of a curious animal appears, holding an inverted vessel in its mouth; it perhaps stands for the dragon which, according to tradition, appeared to bite the rope in two, and caused the cauldron to drop and disappear.

shown; a dragon-head emerging from the vessel which is a regular *Han ting* 鼎; and a man crawling over a bridge is supporting it from beneath.

In the upper panel five personages are represented,—the young king Ch'êng (Ch'êng Wang) of the Chou dynasty, in the middle; two attendants on the right; the Duke of Chou (Chou Kung) and the Duke of Lu (Lu Kung), his councillors, on the left. Of this scene, three designs are known,—one in Wu-liang's tomb (*Sculpture*, Pl. XXVIII, third panel = *Mission*, No. 128; also BUSHELL, Fig. 5); one on the Hiao-t'ang-shan (*Sculpture*, Pl. XXXIX = *Mission*, No. 48); one in the village of Lu (*Lu-ts'un*) (*Sculpture*, Pl. XLIII, third panel; also in *Kin-shih so, shih-so*, Vol. IV). The latter representation comes nearest to that on our bas-relief.

The same scene is repeated, though in a somewhat different version, on the bas-relief reproduced in Plate VII, in the central panel. Here the young king, whose youthfulness is indicated by his small stature in proportion to the men of his retinue, is surrounded by two umbrella-bearers, a flag-bearer on the right, and three spear-bearers on the left. The bronze halbert-like spear called *ko* is a weapon peculiar to the Chou and Han periods. In the upper panel are shown two open chariots covered only by a canopy, and seating each two men, the driver in front and the owner behind him. The horses are of the heavy, broad-chested Ferghana breed. The lower margin is filled by the monster called *huang lung* "the yellow dragon," with long open jaws, protruding vibrating tongue, a set of sharp teeth, a pair of antelope-horns curved backward, a pair of rudimentary wings, four-clawed feet, and long-stretched scaly body. A genius provided with feathered bird-wings, a feather barret, and a feather apron around his loins, is riding astride the monster's back.¹

DR. BUSHELL (*Chinese Art*, Vol. I), who presents the same

¹ "In representing the bodies of genii, one gives them a plumage, and their arms are changed into wings, with which they soar in the air."—FORKE, *Lun-Hêng*, Part I, p. 330.

Laufer, Grave-Sculptures.

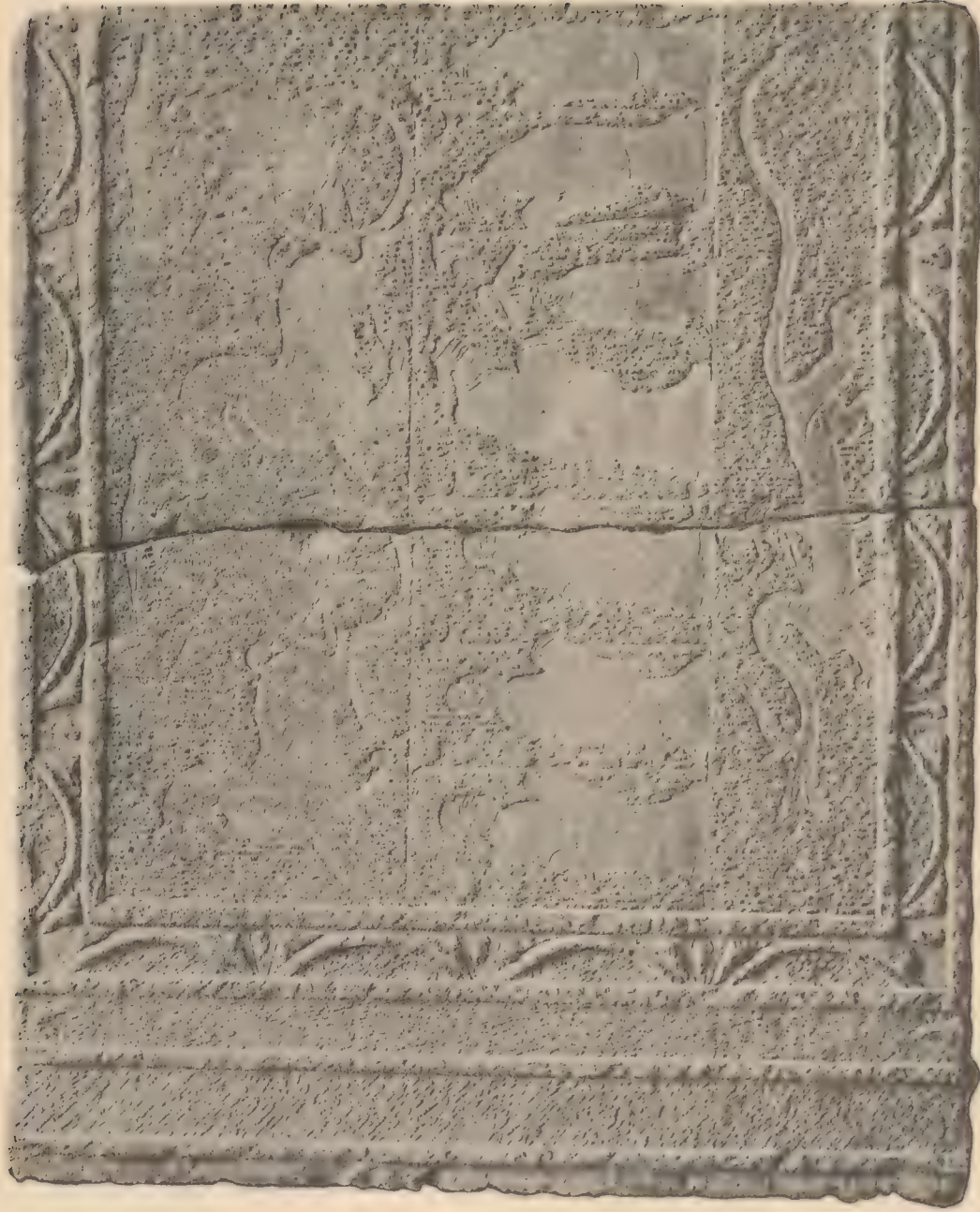


Plate VII.

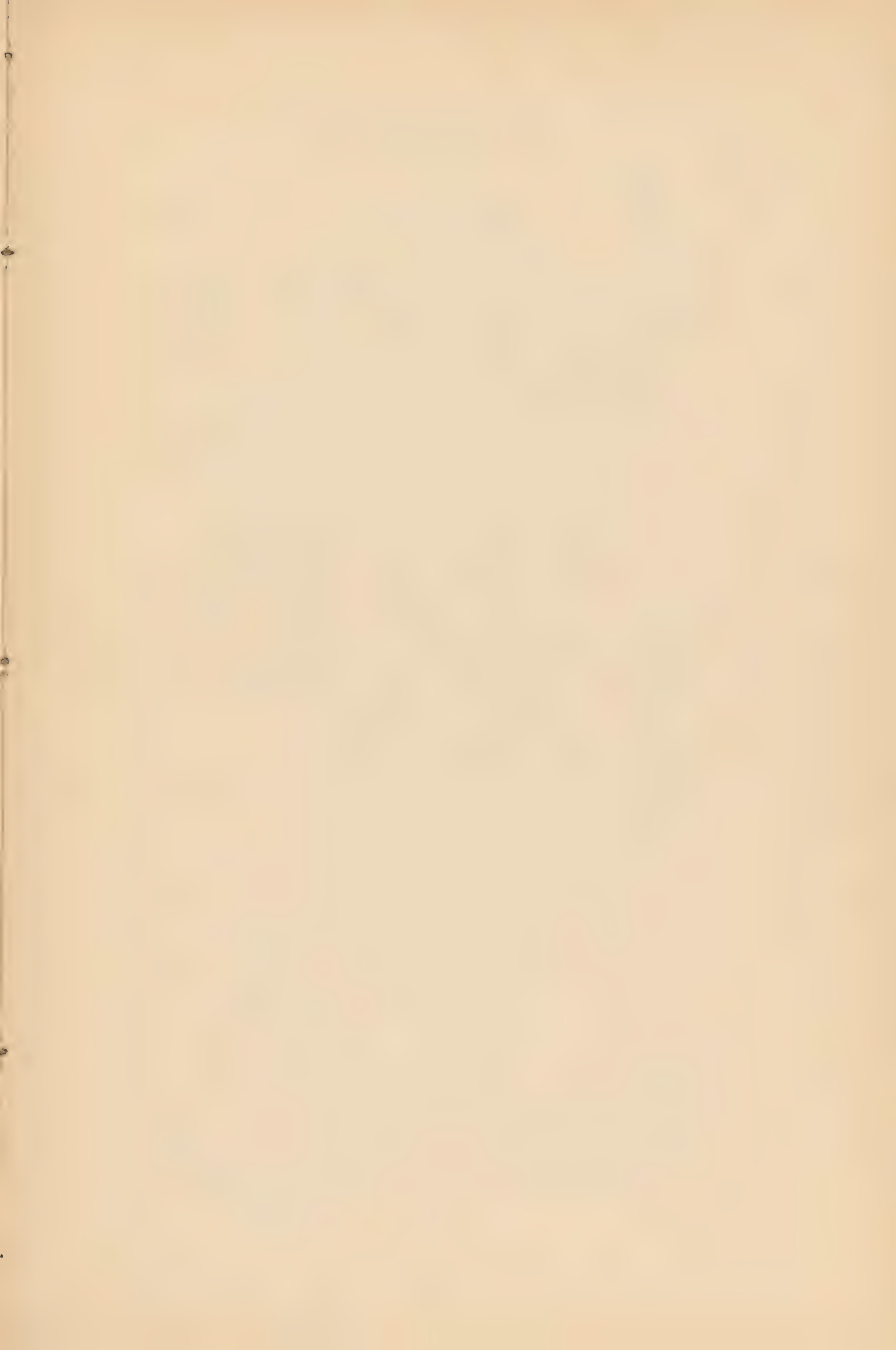




Plate VIII.
Yellow Dragon on Han Bas-Relief
from I-chou fu.

type in Fig. 11 (which by some inadvertence is placed upside down), calls this creature simply the dragon *lung* (p. 37), and jumps at the conclusion that this is the earliest known representation of the Chinese dragon *lung*. The indiscriminate designation of all these monsters as dragons is rather unfortunate, and at the outset handicaps any serious attempts to trace the iconography and mythology of these various forms. In the present case it is decidedly the *huang lung*, a species in itself, not the *lung* which is frequently depicted on the bas-reliefs, but with strikingly different means of artistic expression. For the rest, in the figure of Bushell, only the left side of the rubbing is reproduced, while the right section contains another monster of almost dinosaurus shape, but not scaly. The relief in its entirety is now illustrated in CHAVANNES' *Mission*, No. 54.

To furnish further material for the study of the *huang lung* which will render it clear that it is entirely distinct from the dragon *lung* and also from the hydra-like monster called *ch'ih*, I herewith reproduce in Plate VIII a bas-relief of the Han time (0.50×0.25 m) heretofore unpublished, and discovered near the city of *Yi-chou fu* in the southern part of Shantung. The rubbing of this stone was obtained by me in *T'ai-ngan fu* in January, 1904. Here we see the yellow dragon turning its head backward and raising its right foot. The scales are treated quite geometrically in horse-shoe-like half-circles, finally winding up in a row of four consecutive spirals. This design may be compared with the same monster in CHAVANNES' *Mission*, No. 8, derived from the pillars of T'ai Shih, which likewise is turning its neck and head, but is not lifting the fore-paw; nor is it so massively built, but slender-bodied, and covered with scales of a more realistic conception. Other *huang lung* may be studied in *Mission*, Nos. 23 and 36.

The identification of these mythical creatures with the *huang*

lung is justified by the design among “the marvellous objects of good omen” united on one of the bas-reliefs of Wu-liang. There we see the same reptile lifting the right fore-paw as that in Plate VIII, of the same description as those enumerated previously (here repeated after the *Kin-shih so* in Fig. 12) and interpreted as the *huang lung* or yellow dragon on a contemporaneous label engraved in the stone. The inscription reads, as has been explained by CHAVANNES (*Sculpture*, p. 32), “If the ponds are not drained to catch the fish, then the



Fig. 12.

Yellow Dragon on Han Bas-Relief
(From *Kin-shih so*).

yellow dragon walks in the pond.” (Compare also MAYERS, *Chinese Reader’s Manual*, p. 142, at foot of page.)

This grave-stone (0.82×0.66 m) sculptured in low relief comes from the village of *Hua-lin* 華林, situated in the mountains of Kia-hiang. The slab is broken into two pieces, the relief, however, having suffered no damage. A farmer, in ploughing the field, hit against the

vault and lifted this stone. There were other remains hidden in the soil on his property; but he could not be induced to dig them up, as, after the first excavation, two death-casualties ensued in his family, sufficient cause to intimidate him, on the ground of the logic *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.

The relief on the stone (0.84×0.65 m) in Plate IX is one of the finest high-reliefs known. It originates on a mountain near the village *Lü* 呂村 south of Kia-hiang. The place where it was found is not far from the ruins of the ancient city of Tsiao-ch’êng, where many Han tombs have been discovered. It is surmounted by a gable-shaped top-piece like



the one on the Hiao-t'ang-shan (*Sculpture*, Pl. XL), which would warrant the supposition that it originally belonged to a stone chamber or sacrificial tomb, but not to a stone vault enclosing the coffin, which does not occur in this shape.

The gable is occupied by two large birds, with two broad upright tail-feathers, probably peacocks. (Compare similar birds on the houses of the Hiao-t'ang-shan, *Sculpture*, Pl. 36, 37.) The geometrical designs below, the wave pattern frequent on Han pottery, the lozenge pattern current on Han bricks, and the textile drapery enclosing the relief on both sides, are all favorites of the period. The representation on the relief, though virtually and essentially a mythological subject, presents a strongly geometrical aspect in the spiral curves in which the dragons are conceived, and in the spiral motives below, with triskeles-shaped birds and purely ornamental triskeles attached to them. Behind the dragon's head in the upper left corner, the figure of a man with high pointed cap will be observed, his body terminating in a fish-tail and resting or hovering on a cloud. A celestial genius, he is apparently associated with the dragon, alluring, instigating, and directing him. The large central figure is so fantastic that it defies any plausible definition. The left knee is bent, the right leg stretched far behind. The left arm terminates in a bird's head, presumably so also the right; note, too, the large full figure of a bird behind his right foot; the face is that of a human being; a horn-like object proceeds from the occiput, perhaps connected with the head-dress. The breast is covered, seemingly with a feather-dress, while the rest of the body appears nude. The dragons belonging to the type *ch'ih* have no horns, and smooth slender bodies without scales.

An aerial or rather atmospheric scene of a related character is met with on a bas-relief of Wu-liang (*Sculpture*, Pl. XXXII. third panel). In the second panel the phenomena of thunder

and lightning, and in the third those of rain, are represented. Here the clouds are conceived of as birds ending in double rows of spirals, or as spiral-shaped cloud-patterns with bird-heads attached. Winged genii moving and pushing the clouds are interspersed and send down rain, by which the procession of men in the fourth panel is affected. One genius is occupied in directing a cloud towards a passing chariot, and a dragon with his head and front-feet emerging from below the clouds is spurting water towards the god representing Ursa major.

I believe that a similar atmospheric phenomenon, though in a different style, is expressed on our grave-stone in Plate IX: the birds are symbolic of the clouds, the dragons are endowed with the power of sending rain, and the two genii are coaxing them in order to induce them to rain.

The relief on the stone in Plate X (1.30×0.81 m) coming from the mountains south of Kia-hiang offers great difficulties to an interpretation, as the surface is to a certain extent worn off. The relief is framed by a pattern of lozenges on three sides, and the representation below is enclosed by wave-bands. Four chariots with two inmates in each, followed by a groom on horseback, form an independent view in the upper panel. The remainder is occupied by a two-storied palace posed on pillars, and flanked by two turrets built on double columns and three-storied, each story being roofed, and the third overtopping the roof of the central pavilion. Two rampant birds looking away from each other in a somewhat heraldic style are on the top of the roof, and too large in proportion. In the open hall below there are two figures, sitting and in profile, two bowing in front of them, and two others standing behind. This composition, particularly in the two prostrate men, one placed above the other, reminds one of the scene on one of Wu-liang's reliefs in CHAVANNES' *Sculpture*, 'Pl. XX, for which, however, no explanation is given on

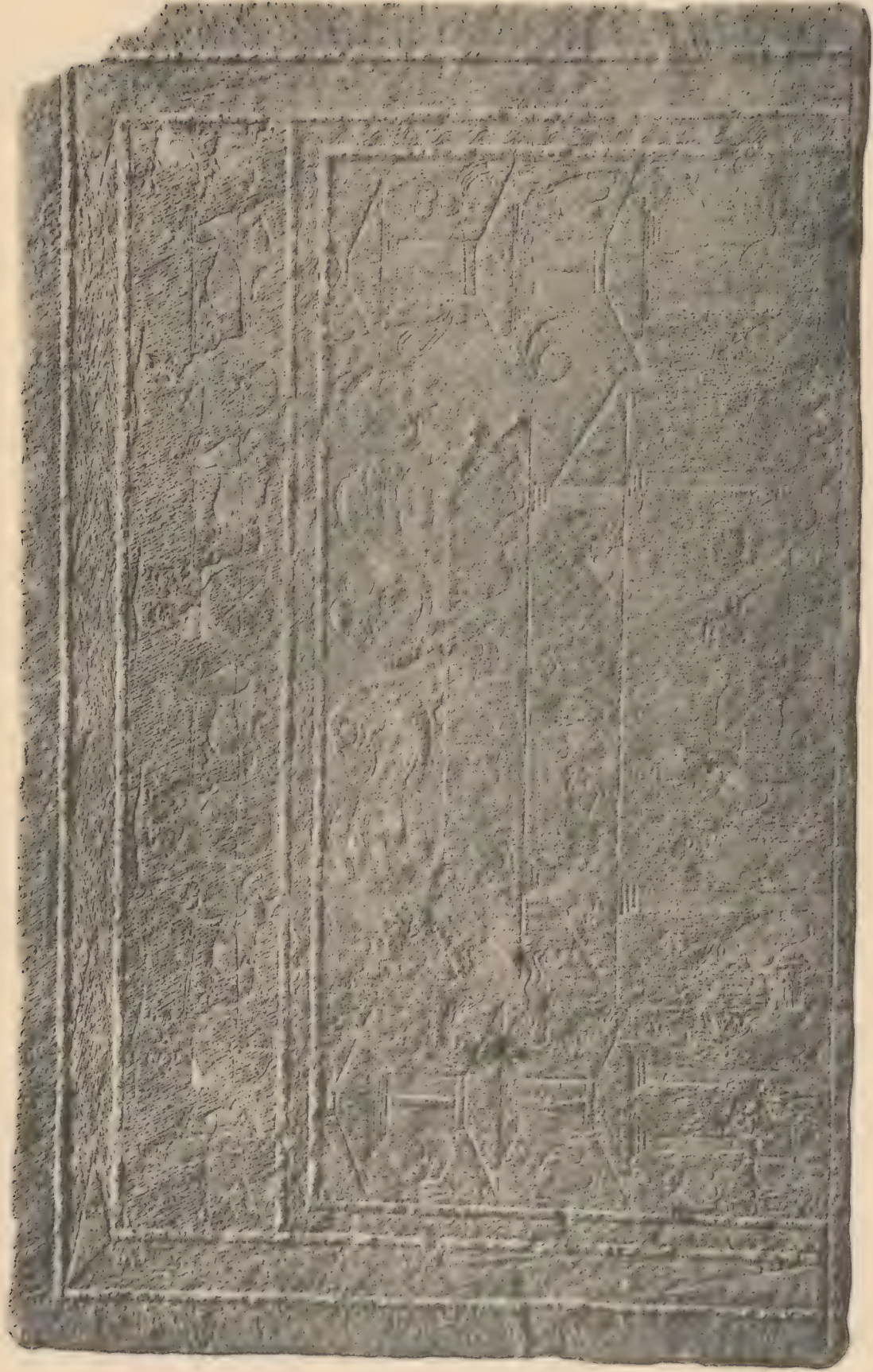


Plate X.

p. 52. This scene is a variation of that in Pl. X, also unidentified, but interpreted by BUSHELL (Chinese Art, Vol. I, p. 41), who has reproduced it in Fig. 16, as the reception of Mu-Wang by Si-Wang-mu. This interpretation is very ingenious, and also plausible to a high degree; but it should be accepted only with the reservation that it is possible, as no explanatory inscription pointing to such a comment is given on the bas-relief itself. It is not possible to apply this motive to our relief under consideration, as Si-Wang-mu, with her court in the upper story, is here wanting. Further, we should take notice of that huge, weird, lizard-like monster mysteriously emerging from the lower roof, where its tail is curved in a spiral, and winding along the right turret to place its neck and mouth around a disc in which also some monster is depicted. It seems that this reptile forms the centre and nucleus of the mythical tradition here represented. It may be allowed to call to mind the legend about the birth of Pao-se, born from a young girl who became pregnant from a black lizard. This one was the transformation of the foam of two divine dragons who had appeared at the time of the Hia dynasty (CHAVANNES, *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, Vol. I, p. 282).

In the interpretation of the subjects and objects represented on the sculptured stone work of the Han time, it is always necessary to fall back on Chinese ideas, as they are all inspired by accounts of Chinese history or notions of Chinese mythical lore. They must be understood in close connection with indigenous tradition, and not detached from the culture sphere from which they have sprung. The neglect of this principle and of a comparative study of the available reliefs caused the failure of Prof. FISCHER to understand the meaning of the upper scene on his stone II, reproduced in *T'oung Pao*, 1908

(opp. p. 580 = *Mission*, No. 171). To grasp the significance of the female deity there depicted, we need not, as Mr. Fischer insists, have our imagination carried away to Egypt. We have here before us a representation of an ancient Chinese astral deity, the well-known Spinning Damsel.¹ On the Hiao-t'ang-shan she is figured as a real star goddess, a girl working at a loom, with three stars over her head, which are α , η , and γ , Lyræ (BUSHELL, *Chinese Art*, Vol. I, p. 38, with Fig. 14 = *Mission*, No. 53; CHAVANNES, *Sculpture*, p. 84). Huai-nan-tse, who died in B.C. 122, has narrated her romantic love-story with the Cowherd, the star Aquila, from whom she was separated all the year round by the Milky Way, and whom she was allowed to meet only on the seventh night of the seventh month on a bridge formed on the sky by a flock of magpies (MAYERS, *Chinese Reader's Manual*, p. 97; DE GROOT, *Les fêtes annuelles*, Vol. II, p. 436; W. GRUBE, *Zur Pekinger Volkskunde*, p. 76; STENZ, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde Süd-Schantungs*, p. 57). A parallel to Fischer's relief is offered by the pillar of Nan-wu-yang (*Mission*, No. 155), third panel. Here the spinning-maid is working at her loom, and the avenue is formed of three magpies on the wing in front of her. Strings are fastened to their bodies, and their ends held in the girl's hand. The scene on Fischer's stone is somewhat different. The three magpies are drawn there in the same way, and also the frame of the spinning-wheel is visible. The girl's face and upper body appear in front of this frame; and she is leaning forward, giving signs with her hands, for obviously it is the day when the cowherd is allowed to approach her. The cowherd is represented in the central figure with

¹ According to the investigation of CHAVANNES (*Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, Vol. III, p. 339, Note 2), it is from the second century before our era that the stars have been regarded as the residences of certain deities.

wide-open mouth which is so conspicuously delineated that it can escape nobody's attention. This characteristic signifies that he is shouting; and he shouts to the magpies or to his sweetheart, or maybe to both, announcing his arrival. The girl has heard and understood his yell, for she has directed the magpies to fly towards him, and remains standing in anxious expectation. Whether the figure squatting behind the spinning-maid is Si-wang-mu, who according to tradition took her up to the celestial region, or some astral deity, is useless to speculate on; the bird-headed figure on the right is surely meant to designate some star god.

Under the Emperor Wên of the Ts'î dynasty, a custom sprang up that on the evening of the festival of the seventh day of the seventh moon women should ascend a terrace and thread seven needles in honor of the Weaver. Tu-ling nei-shih, the gifted daughter of the great Ming painter K'iu Ying, has left us a good painting narrating this observance, which will be found in No. 147 of the Kokka (1902). In the palace an artificial hill was erected, and robes were worn, on the *p'u-tse* of which a picture of the magpie-bridge was embroidered (GRUBE, l.c., p. 78). The magpies render help, remarks E. Box in his able study of Shanghai Folklore (*Journal China Br.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXXVI, Shanghai, 1905, p. 146), by spreading their wings, and thus making a bridge for the herd-boy to cross the river to meet his true love. Also in Shanghai, according to the same author, women try in the moonlight at night to thread a needle, holding it up to the light of the moon, or placing it on paper, or floating it in water. If at the first attempt they succeed in threading the needle, they regard it as a prophecy of great good luck, and that they will be clever in all emergencies.

The representations on the Han bas-reliefs are the most precious documents at our disposal for the study of the culture-life of the ancient Chinese. They display to us their houses and palaces, their activity in the kitchen with a felicitous realism, their indoor and outdoor doings, their feastings and amusements, their means of transportation, their costumes, weapons, and sports, their musical instruments and household utensils; and last not least, the favorite mythical conceptions of those days. This material is of such great importance that it deserves the closest study in all its details. Years ago I conceived the plan of having drawings made of all culture-objects appearing on the bas-reliefs, and of arranging them in proper groups, to form the basis for an atlas depicting the ancient culture of China by way of reconstruction. The pottery, bronze, iron,¹ and jade of the Han period will be laid under contribution to the same end, and it is hoped that it will be possible to bring this publication out in a few years.

The history of the mime is a subject which has commanded the attention of orientalists and ethnologists for a decade, but no notable contribution to this topic has so far come out from the Chinese field. To show the culture-historical significance of the Han bas-reliefs, I propose to consider briefly what can be gleaned from them in this line.

The Chinese have never been the strictly serious people whom we like to make them out, in viewing them under the ruling influence of their rigid ethical system. They were always fond of games and pastimes, and seldom missed an occasion for plays and merry-making. That there was also a merry old China during the Han time, we readily grasp from

¹ In my collection in the Field Museum, Chicago, consisting of over 6000 objects of Chinese antiquities and 5000 specimens from Tibet, there are also a dozen iron objects of the Han period,—a large cooking-stove with inscription, cooking-kettles, lamps, spears, coin-moulds, and others.

a series of reliefs the subjects of which are music, dancing, and jugglery, the three intimately connected one with another and presumably interrelated since of old. Considering the fact that the designs met with on the Han reliefs are on the whole severe and dignified, and even seem to bear out a tendency to impart moral instruction, it is the more noteworthy to find also such scenes of popular jollification in connection with the mortuary abode. From this we may infer that such entertainments were very dear to the people of that age, and played an important rôle in their daily life. Everything placed in the mortuary chamber, or there represented by the means of art, had the significance of a living reality, and the beloved dead were supposed to continue to enjoy those pleasures which had been favorites with them during life.

The following theatrical representations have become known.

1. A regular representation of magic art is illustrated on a bas-relief of Wu-liang (*Sculpture*, Pl. XIV (p. 46) = *Mission*, No. 104), third panel, scene to the right. The formal character of the performance is shown in the three spectators solemnly taking their seats on cushions spread on the ground. One of them gesticulating with his hands addresses a question or gives instruction to one of the two magicians facing the audience. Their paraphernalia are displayed in front of them in the shape of a mat, dishes, a plate, a kettle, and a magic square. CHAVANNES (p. 46) regards these objects as the utensils of a repast; but I am under the impression that it would be more appropriate to the situation to interpret them in the sense indicated, as the outfits of the jugglers for the performance of their tricks. Working in exactly the same manner, one can daily observe them in modern China. Two of their associates are entertaining the guests by acrobatic feats, — one dancing, as symbolized by his fluttering sleeves; the other

crawling on his hands, head downward and feet upward, — both performing on vessel-shaped objects or drums(?).

2. A scene in the stone chamber of Wu-liang (*Sculpture*, Pl. XXIII): a juggler performing feats over five vessels placed in a row, holding a fan in the right hand stretched upward, face upward, assisted by two men on either side. The one on the left hands him an object having the appearance of an umbrella, evidently a servant who is responsible for the artist's paraphernalia being brought in at the right moment. The other man, prostrate, apparently attempts to walk on his hands, and is perhaps the comical clown, who clumsily tries to imitate the master performer, and is still an accompanying feature in all good Chinese jugglers' shows. On the right of the picture is the musical orchestra playing to the performance, as music is also nowadays indispensable for any performance of whatever kind. Only three of the musicians are actually at work; they are divided into two groups,—three women and three men facing each other. The foremost woman plays on the lyre *kin* 琴, the second man blows a long flute held in vertical position, and the third man blows a horizontal pipe.

3. A scene on one of the reliefs of the Hiao-t'ang-shan (*Sculpture*, Pl. XXXIX), in the fifth row on the right-hand side: a ball-juggler tossing seven balls at a time into the air; behind him a performer kneeling, and holding a pyramid of four acrobats hanging on a pole with two crossbars; two boys standing on their hands and clinging to the upper bar, one grasping by his hand another man, who freely dangles in the air, while his counterpart stands on his head and clings to the upper bar with his right foot, supporting his head on the lower crossbar, — a feat which in one or another variation may still be seen in our circuses. There is also an orchestra; but of the instruments, only a short flute held in an oblique position may be discerned. We accordingly observe two types

of flute, a short and a long one; good examples of the latter may be seen on the following plate (*Sculpture*, Pl. XL), where two marching flute-players precede a procession of horseback-riders and chariots.

4. In his "Mission archéologique," CHAVANNES has published a number of Han bas-reliefs, the rubbings of which he obtained on his journey in Shantung, but which he has not been able to identify as to locality. Among these there are several grave-stones with remarkable scenes falling under this category. On the stone from *Tsiao-ch'êng ts'un* (No. 151) — which, despite its doubtful authenticity, seems to me genuine, — we see a juggler playing with nine balls at a time, two in his hands, the others in the air, and another in the act of turning a somersault. Between them are two drum-players working vehemently with sticks on a drum which is suspended by means of two straps from a bar resting on a pole. The same contrivance is familiar to us from a scene in one of the reliefs of the Hiao-t'ang-shan (*Sculpture*, Pl. XXXVII = *Mission*, No. 45, upper panel, centre) where an orchestra is seen riding in a chariot,¹ four musicians playing presumably reed organs, and two drum-players above them. Also here they are very emotional in brandishing their pair of sticks with arms lifted high, and represented as almost dancing. The drum is remarkable, because on no other bas-relief is it so clearly outlined and decorated. It is of the same barrel shape as the modern instruments; and the ornamentation, evidently painted on, allows of the conclusion that the barrel was then also made of wood, and the two side-openings were certainly covered with skins. In front of this drum there is a hanging flat metal (bronze) bell, of a type similar to that figured by BUSHELL under Fig. 63

¹ This chariot is also reproduced by BUSHELL, *Chinese Art*, Vol. I, Fig. 9.

in his "Chinese Art," Vol. I.¹ In this case the drum is attached to the canopy of the chariot, supported upon a central pole. The canopy ends on both sides in a dragon-head, — a feature which does not occur in other chariots; it therefore seems to be a peculiar characteristic of this orchestral vehicle, and may be accounted for by the presence of the drum. Indeed, we find also in modern China the frames in which drums and bells are suspended, being adorned with carved dragon-heads (occasionally also bird-heads) in the two upper corners.² Mr. A. C. MOULE, in his excellent paper "A List of the Musical and other Sound-producing Instruments of the Chinese,"³ has also reproduced this chariot in his Plate XIII for its great historical importance, and identifies this drum with the *kao*, "a chariot drum used in war," mentioned in several ancient books. This may be, but the fact should not be overlooked that this chariot, although like one in appearance, is not a war-chariot, but is taking part in a peaceful festival procession of the "Great King" 大玉, expressly so designated; also the players on the reed organ, an instrument of joy, would be out of place and to no purpose on a war-chariot.

On the bas-relief first referred to (*Mission*, No. 151) we notice a striped dog, or rather tiger, under the drum-pole; it is turning its head backward, and has its mouth open to indicate that it is roaring. Also on the four following representations to be mentioned the same animal appears in the same place, and is apparently intended to convey the idea of a wood-carving to serve as a base or stand, as the pole passes right through it. In the upper panel three figures of men are seated, — the one on the right in profile, playing a large reed-organ;

¹ Belonging to the class *k'ing* 磬; see VAN AALST, *Chinese Music*, p. 49 (Shanghai, 1884).

² See examples in VAN AALST, *l.c.*, pp. 48, 49, 54, 56, 78.

³ *Journal of the China Branch of the R. As. Soc.*, Vol. XXXIX, 1908.

the one on the left *en face*, holding a seven-stringed lyre (the *kin*, the Japanese *koto*) which is here well delineated; he apparently is pausing in his play. The central figure has the hands folded over his breast, and seems to be a mere looker-on and auditor.

5. On the bas-relief in *Mission*, No. 158, third panel, we witness a dancing-scene, a couple, evidently a man and a woman, engaged in a contre-dance; the man wearing a short jacket and trowsers, the woman clad in a long gown with trail covering her feet and unusually long cuffs attached to her sleeves (as has also the man). The effect of the dance appears largely to rest on the bold vibrating motions of these sleeve-tails which are now waved over the head, now seem to touch the ground. The same drum as before, and the brave drummers are represented as holding their arms in almost the same way, and in the same general posture.

6. In bas-relief No. 160 we notice the same pair of drummers, the drum being protected by a canopy. Here, each is handling a pair of big wooden mallets; and their position indicates that beating ensues regularly in time, and rhythmically. The first tone is struck with the right hand of A and the left hand of B simultaneously against the lower edge of the drum-skins; and the second is sounded with A's left and B's right hand, probably against the upper edges. The mode of suspension of the drum differs here from that in the other cases, in that it is fastened to two wooden cross-poles running from the ceiling of the room towards the middle part of the upper edge of the drum, to join there the central pole stuck through the barrel, as a black incision in the middle of the drum here clearly indicates. This instrument comes very near to the type described by MOULE (l.c., p. 55) under the name *ying-ku* as "a barrel-shaped drum supported in a horizontal position by a post which stands on a foot made of four

wooden tigers arranged in the form of a cross. The post passes through the drum, and has a large silk canopy fixed to its top." (Compare Fig. 13.) The performers are here two jugglers, one ball-acrobat who works with four balls and catches them on his forehead, and a man dancing on his belly. In the upper panel a man is playing on a double reed organ,

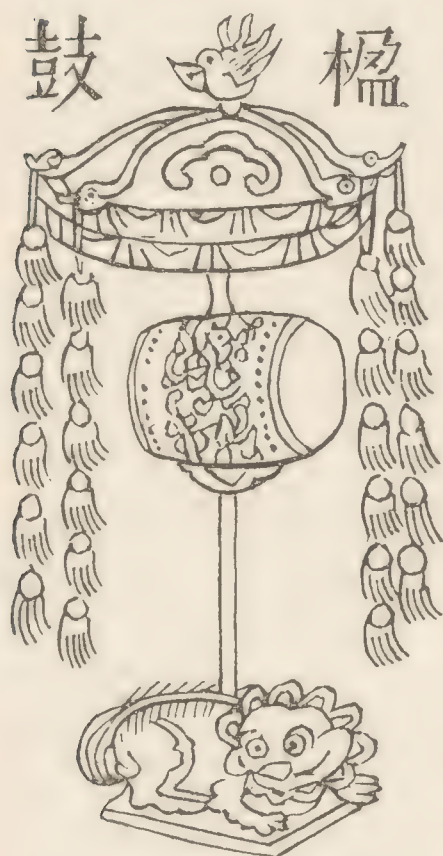


Fig. 13.

Drum called *ying-ku*
(From *Shêng mên yo chi*).

and another on a double bagpipe, the other instruments not being clearly visible.

7. Very elaborate is the theatrical scene on bas-relief No. 163, where a variety of dancing, jugglery, acrobating, and music are combined. A slender woman in long flowing dress, girdled around the waist, with trail extending to both sides, is in the act of dancing, as illustrated by the long fluttering sleeves; those of her male partner, who is dancing on two big balls under his feet, are still longer. Though his body is represented *en face*, his head is in profile, so that he can look at his lady. Above this couple (that is to say, behind them) there are three clever acrobats walk-

ing on their hands; the drummers are the same as before; among the musicians, also one with a double reed organ, and in the upper row one with a lyre, are noticeable; this last man holds the instrument transversely over the railing, in the same manner as in No. 151, only in the opposite direction.

It may not be superfluous to add that all these performances bear a purely worldly character; above all, the dances have no religious significance, but seem to be a merely secular

entertainment performed by a professional class of dancers. The religious dances of the ancient Chinese were all pantomimes, given exclusively by a group of men, holding or brandishing some object in their hands like battle-axes, bucklers, plumes, oxtail-brushes, or flags; while on the bas-reliefs, as we saw, a man and a woman dance conjointly.¹ The composition in No. 149 is instructive in this respect, because it allows the inference that the entertainment is given in the house in connection with the celebration of a big slaughtering-feast. A busy activity is displayed in the kitchen, centring around an energetic hog-killing. One man drags a pig in, another thrusts a knife into the heart of an animal which he has thrown on the ground and grasps by its feet. Above, two ball-players and drummers with an orchestra are seriously at work, and their courage is heightened by the expectation of some share in a dish of pork.

8. A single dancing woman may be represented also on the stone No. 182, which CHAVANNES designates as "stone of Tsi-ning chou." When I obtained a rubbing of this stone in *T'ai-ngan fu* in January 1904, the locality was given to me as *Pai-yang ts'un* 白楊村, a village in Tsi-ning chou. This relief is very curious, as only women are outlined there, in very crude shapes, without any attempt having been made to draw the faces, which are lacking in eyes, noses, and mouths. The standing dancer is in style not unlike that in No. 163; three kneeling women are in the same panel, and one figure in the centre defies explanation. This scene is laid in the lower story of a house, while the upper story is occupied by a row of three sitting women, evidently spectators of the performance.

¹ Compare also No. 156, Pillar of *Nan-wu-yang*, fourth panel, a woman dancing in long dress, and her male partner dancing on his hands, with orchestra of four.

9. A snake-juggler is, in all likelihood, figured on the second stone from *Liu-kia ts'un* (*Mission*, No. 148, second panel): one man holds a powerful cobra; his companion, carrying a sword on his back, and turning his head away from the approach of the serpent, performs the drumming. Both figures are strikingly characterized as non-Chinese by their peculiar costumes, head-dresses, and queer physiognomy. Their long mustaches, with ends turned up in an approved style of modern times,—which, for the rest, is merely a revival of an ancient Turkish and Hungarian fashion,¹—conspicuously betray the foreigner. They are probably real cobra-jugglers from India; the ornament on the head of the man with the cobra is very similar to the figure of the *Çrivatsa* (in Chinese *p'an ch'ang*, see GRUBE, *Zur Peking'er Volkskunde*, p. 141, No. 4), now one of the eight precious symbols (*pa-pao*, Skr. *aṣṭaratna*) of Buddhism; while the decoration on the other man's head seems to denote a tortoise-shell comb, such as the Singhalese of nowadays wear. Also the presence of the cobra seems to point in the direction of India.

There is, further, a curious illustration of acrobatic feats handed down in the *Kin shih t'u shuo* (Vol. I, p. 24), first published in 1743 (new edition, 1893, 4 v., 4°); it is engraved in stone, forming part of the remains of a temple built in 126 A.D. ten *li* north of *Têng-fêng hien*, in the province of Honan. We see there (Fig. 14) two saddled horses running in flying gallop.² On the first, a woman is standing on her head, holding the bridle with her hands supported on the front part of the saddle. The following horse is occupied by

¹ It is an interesting survival that also in the modern Chinese theatre the stage-fool with white-daubed face appears with big turned-up mustache.

² The first of these horses has been figured also by S. REINACH, *La représentation du galop dans l'art ancien et moderne*, p. 91 (Paris, 1901), as an example of this motive of art.



Fig. 14.
Equestrian Acrobats and Football Match
on a Han Bas-Relief of 126 A. D.
(from *Kin shih t'u shuo*).

a man sitting sideways and keeping balance by swinging his arms in their long sleeves.¹

The other scene shows a football match,—at least, this is

¹ The explanation of the Chinese editor runs thus: 兩人走馬而舞 爲角抵戲. The last clause can hardly be accepted as a correct inter-

the editor's opinion (索毬而踢鞠), and I believe he is right. The two players are armed with sticks, a large ball between them; one of them is making for a high leap to kick the ball with his right foot, and striking it at the same time with his stick. It will be noticed that this figure, with excessively long sleeves, is dressed and postured, particularly in the treatment of the arms, like the dancers on the bas-reliefs. In all probability, this is the oldest representation of a football-match on record.¹ Also on a pillar of the mother of K'ai, a football-player is evidently represented (*Mission*, No. 25).

The representation of comedians and their feats on the ancient monuments sacred to the dead finds its counterpart in a custom of the present time of having theatricals played 唱戲 two days before the funeral takes place, for four consecutive days. Though this custom has now become obsolete in most parts of China, it still prevails in *Pao-ting fu*, where also equestrian women are invited (L. WIEGER, *Morale et Usages*, 2d ed., Ho-kien fu, 1905, p. 535). This is a regular class of horse acrobats called *pao ma hieh-ti* 跑馬解的 or flying courtesans *fei ch'ang* 飛娼. The tricks performed by them on the occasion of a funeral, as described by the Chinese informant

pretation. Prof. H. A. GILES, *The Home of Jiu Jitsu (Adversaria Sinica*, No. 5, Shanghai, 1906, pp. 133—134), has fully described the sport of *Kio-ti* "butting," which "apparently consisted in putting an ox-skin, horns and all, over the head, and then trying to knock one's adversary out of time by butting at him after the fashion of bulls, as in the illustration annexed." This is taken from the *San-ts'ai t'u hui*, and certainly bears no point of similarity with the feat on the Han bas-relief; it is also hard to see how two people vaulting on horses galloping one behind the other could butt each other, unless our author here understands something else by *kio-ti*.²

¹ Football was much cultivated in the Han period, as has been proved through ample literary quotations by Prof. H. A. GILES in his interesting paper "Football and Polo in China" (*Adv. Sin.*, No. 4, pp. 87—98). See also STEWART CULIN, *Korean Games*, pp. 40—41 (Philadelphia, 1895), and HIMLY in *T'oung Pao*, Vol. VI, 1895, p. 273.

of F. WIEGER, standing erect on horseback 立的馬上, or head downward 腦瓜適下, or standing on one foot only 一條腿在馬上立着, almost fit the above Han bas-relief in Fig. 14 as an explanatory text, and we may conclude that such bohemians of the equestrian art were organized as early as the Han period, and also then took part in funeral ceremonies.





*Mr. Charles T. Freer
with kindest remembrances
of the author.
Chicago, January 4, 1911*

CHINESE GRAVE-SCULPTURES OF THE HAN PERIOD

BY

BERTHOLD LAUFER

TEN PLATES AND FOURTEEN TEXT-FIGURES



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